

My name is Frances Herman and I am a resident of New Hartford. I am a member of CT Against Gun Violence and a Deacon in our local Congregational church.

I am greatly saddened at the increased loss of life and injuries due to gun violence in our state. This has become an urgent health crisis, with – on average - someone being murdered every three days in Connecticut. Gun violence is also taking a significant toll on the physical, psychological and emotional health of our children, especially in our Black and Hispanic communities. I am motivated by my Christian faith to support efforts to discern and dismantle the root causes of gun violence. Though I am proud of Connecticut's strong gun laws and law enforcement professionals, I am convinced that we need to invest more in developing and disseminating methods to de-escalate conflict and interrupt cycles of violence.

While I believe reducing deaths and injuries – physical and psychological - from gun violence is a moral imperative, it also makes economic sense. According to data noted by the Giffords Law Center, it is estimated that gun violence costs CT taxpayers between \$60-\$90 million per year.

I am writing to express my support for the language in HB-5397, An Act Declaring Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis and Establishing the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, because it incorporates five important components that should be present in whichever bill is voted out of your committee:

- It declares gun violence a public health crisis and addresses the issue on a sustained basis, with staff responsible for grant-making, monitoring to ensure that objectives are met, research and policy recommendations et al.
- It houses the solution in the Department of Public Health where it can have the greatest impact.
- It has mechanisms to include voices of those most impacted by community gun violence.
- It includes a robust data gathering and research capacity to drive evidence-informed grant-making.
- It calls for funding commensurate with the magnitude of the crisis.

Thank you for reading this testimony.

Respectfully,

Frances Herman of New Hartford